

# NATIONAL RECORDER.

Containing Essays upon subjects connected with Political Economy, Science, Literature, &c.; Papers read before the Agricultural Society of Philadelphia; a Record of passing Events; Selections from Foreign Magazines, &c. &c.

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## Miscellany.

### *On the Origin of the Celebration of Christmas.*

From the New Monthly Magazine.

It was no strange circumstance, that at the dawn of Christianity every festival which was observed by the Jews should be equally solemnized by the Christian converts of the first century. A great portion of these converts had gone over from the Jewish to the Christian faith; and this portion was, for a long time, unable wholly to emancipate itself from the trammels of earthly impressions. Nay, the apostles themselves were tenacious of the Jewish feasts, and retained, amongst others, those of the Passover and Pentecost. It was but by slow degrees that the Christians were able to estrange themselves from the Jewish observances, to throw off the usages of the sons of Abraham, and transform the festivals which they had brought with them on the day of their conversion, into Christian anniversaries. Far, however, from seeking to abandon the customs and solemnities which had once been received into their new church, they set themselves about rendering them typical of some important occurrences in the history of their religion. By this permutation the festival of Easter was grafted on the feast of the Passover; Pentecost was converted into an annual commemoration of the descent of the Holy Ghost; and out of the Jewish Sabbath arose our Sunday, than which no other day in the seven could by possibility be of deeper importance or more awful interest to the believer in the Saviour's resurrection.

Among the early Christians, there were many too who dwelt in Heathen countries; and not a few of this class having themselves abandoned the splendid superstitions of Paganism for the noble simplicity of Christian doctrine, introduced Heathen festivals among their brethren, and gave such an interpretation to their transmigration as was consistent with the character of their new faith.

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In the lapse of time, Christianity having extended itself to the palace, and its ministers having succeeded in acquiring a considerable share of power and influence, they were not wanting to themselves in any contrivance which could invest their religion with greater external pomp and dignity. They knew that every increase of its outward splendour would have the effect of shedding additional lustre on its expounders; and with this conviction, every occurrence in the history of their faith was diligently ransacked, that its memory might be perpetuated by some festival: indeed so widely was this field enlarged, that at last, a manufactory of fictions was set up, which were greedily swallowed by their ignorant and credulous flocks; amongst whom, these inventions served the intended purpose of enlarging the catalogue of religious observances and festivals.

We must return, however, from these matters to the more immediate object of our inquiries.

We have already remarked that many of the anniversaries solemnized by the Christian church were transplanted into it from the Heathen soil. Whilst Easter has succeeded to the "Ferialia" of the Romans, there can be little doubt that Christmas has taken the place of their "Saturnalia."\* This festival, instituted in honour of Saturn, was celebrated by them with the greatest splendour, debauchery and extravagance. It was, during its duration, an epoch of freedom and equality: the master ceased to be master, and the slave to be slave; the former waited, at his own board, upon the latter. The ceremonial of this festival was opened on the 19th of December, by the lighting of a profusion of waxen flambeaux in the temple of Saturn, as an expiatory offering to the relenting God, who had, in remoter times, been worshipped with human sacrifices. At this festive

\* "Christmas" says Selden, "succeeds the Saturnalia; the same time, the same number of holy days."



season, boughs and laurel were profusely suspended in every quarter, and presents were interchanged on all sides.\*

The Christian church was anxious to abolish the observance of these Saturnalia, in which she blushed to see her own disciples partaking; and therefore appointed a festival in honour of her divine Master, to supersede them. If, during the Roman games, the order of social affairs were inverted, and the menial was raised to be master, surely it was not unnatural that they should, in their purer features be adopted as the model of an anniversary in commemoration of that Christ, the King of kings, who had appeared in the garb of a menial, and had elevated those who were the slaves of their sins, to be lords and chiefs among the heavenly hosts! Though of Heathen origin, the festival of Christmas no longer exhibited sacrifices of bulls or goats; it was carefully pruned of those disgusting features and extravagances which nourished and excited debasing passions; and yet, in order that it might not prove revolting to the habits and feelings of the new convert who was called upon to resign the meretricious blandishments of the Saturnalia, it was permitted to retain such innoxious customs from the Pagan celebration, as were not wholly irreconcilable with the bland and cheerful spirit of Christianity. The torches which had shed their effulgence through the temple of Saturn, shone with undiminished splendour in the temple of Christian worship, and presented, as it were, a symbol of Jesus, "that eternal light which was born into the world" to waken the whole human race to life and immortality;—which illuminated the fields of Bethlehem, and shone about the shepherds, "a lamp unto their feet, and a light unto their paths."† The Sa-

\* It is singular that our Druid ancestors, as well as the Greeks and Romans, devoted this season of the year to ceremonies and religious observances.

† On the night preceding Christmas day, our forefathers were accustomed to light up candles of enormous size, which were called "Christmas candles," and with which they illuminated their houses in honour of the Saviour's nativity. The same custom prevailed from the days of St. Jerome: "accenduntur luminaria jam sole rutilante, non utique ad fugandas tenebras, sed ad signum lætitiæ demonstrandum." *Cont. Vigil. c. 2.*—"On the night of the Saviour's birth," says also Chateaubriand, "troops of children adoring the manger, churches gay and brilliant with flowers, the multitude pressing around the cradle of their God, joyous hallelujahs, and the air re-echoing with the sounds of bells and or-

turnalian custom of decking the streets and houses with laurels and boughs, and exchanging presents was also preserved, and has partially descended to our own times. The interchange of presents was supposed to typify the spiritual and heavenly gifts which our Saviour, by his coming had lavished upon mankind.

There is one custom in particular, prevalent in some countries, and formerly common in England, which strikingly designates the origin of our Christmas festivities. And it is this: from amongst the domestics of a family, it was the practice to elect one as the master of the household, under the appellation of the Christmas king, or lord of misrule, and to assign him a species of sovereignty both over the other servants, as well as the immediate members of the family. In this way, as Selden remarks, "the master waited on his servant as the lord of misrule;" and "the like," says Stow, "had ye in the house of every nobleman of honour or good worship, were he spiritual or temporal."

In some Catholic countries there is a custom of dressing up puppets, called Christmas children, hiding them on Christmas eve, setting persons in quest of them, and giving a reward to the finder; nor is it improbable that this custom was also derived from the Heathen practice of sending puppets as presents during the Saturnalia. "At Rome" says an ancient calendar, "sweetmeats were presented to the fathers in the Vatican, as well as all kinds of *little images*;"‡ and these last were found in abundance in the confectioners' shops."—Nay, in England, the bakers used formerly to bake a kind of baby, or little image of paste, which they presented to their customers; in the same way as chandlers gave Christmas candles.

Before we take our leave of this subject, we cannot refrain from adverting to a singular tradition, from which some have been willing to derive the name given to this festival, in the east.§ It is related by some

gans, presented a noble spectacle of innocence and majesty."—*Génie du Christianisme*.

‡ In Vaticano—

"Dulcia patribus exhibentur,  
—Omnium generum imagunculæ."

§ Our English appellation of Christmas originated in the mass at this season being called *Christ's mass*: it was usual, at this season for the Romish priests to offer up masses to the saints, imploring forgiveness for the people of their debaucheries, or backslidings, at this festival. The German name for the season is "Wein-nachten," or wine nights, which some



of the old fathers of the church, that, on the night of our Saviour's birth, a number of fountains and rivers were turned into wine; and they add, that this miracle took place on the very night, and at the very hour of his nativity, in order that the disbelievers in the truth of revelation might be turned from their unbelief. St. Chrysostom says, in one of his homilies, that the water drawn on that night, kept for some years without undergoing any natural change; and he concludes that from this circumstance arose the tradition we have mentioned. Epiphanius, the first father of the church, indeed places so much credit in the tale, that he ventures to make use of it as one weapon for confounding the infidels of his day. However, the second father of that name, who lived thirty years later, pronounces this tradition to be, what it really appears to have been, a fable; though he still believes it to be the distortion of some different occurrence. Be all this as it may, the tradition was once of general notoriety; the people placed implicit faith in it; many of the fathers sided with them; and none but the enlightened Chrysostom were unable to persuade themselves of its authenticity. S.

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FROM BLACKWOOD'S EDINBURGH MAGAZINE.

*On the Literary Characters of Bishop Warburton and Dr. Johnson.*

The two greatest men of the last century in our national literature, the greatest in comprehensiveness of mind and variety of talent, were undoubtedly bishop Warburton and Dr. Johnson. For a long period of time, they exercised a kind of joint domination over the republic of letters—a dominion which, in the former, chiefly arose from the hardy and unshrinking defiance of public opinion he exhibited, backed by extraordinary intellectual force and vigour; and, in the latter, had its origin in the universal awe and veneration his genius and character had excited. In the one, it was a tribute which fear of an immediate consequent castigation compelled all to pay; in the other, it was a homage more voluntary, because less enforced, to powers of the

highest magnitude, and virtue of the most unblemished purity. The one, accounting dissent from his favourite theories as a crime of the blackest die, punished all nonconformists to the idol he had set up with a most merciless measure of pains and penalties; while the latter, possessing, indeed, not less of haughtiness and irritability, but more of prudence, had the good sense to leave to public opinion his justification against the attacks of his enemies. This joint and equal literary supremacy, notwithstanding that it was occasionally disturbed by frequent murmurings of jealousy in the former, and growlings of fearless opposition in the latter, continued, without being shaken by intestine division, till the former had lost in inanity and dotage, his great mental acuteness and strength,—and thus the latter had, by the departure of his rival, become the sole literary potentate of his country. Time, however, which as frequently consigns to neglect the meritorious productions of literature, as it showers down an increase of fame on the compositions of deserving genius, has long since quieted the bustle which the pen of Warburton always excited in his lifetime; and his name, once numbered amongst the mighty of the earth, has been for some time subjected to a partial if not total neglect. As the Roman Catholic church treated the bones of Wickliffe with contumely, whom, living, they could not overcome; so the public seemed determined to revenge upon Warburton, when dead, the contempt they experienced from his haughtiness, and the unwillingly paid devotion which he enforced to his powers when living. And in the length of time which has elapsed from the period of his decease to the present day, many a kick has been inflicted on the dead lion by animals who could not have dared to approach him while capable of defending and revenging himself.\* Popular hostility, as well as private, ought, however, to give place to candid examination and allowance; and when exercised against a deserving subject, will only, in the end, reflect disgrace upon itself for an unworthy exercise of

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derive from the tradition above alluded to, and others from the practice which prevailed among the ancient Germans, of celebrating this period of the year by general drinking bouts, and interchanging presents of "the juice of the grape."

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\* Amongst these, see one Watkins, the author of a book called *Anecdotes of distinguished Characters*; who, in a note to the work, would fain persuade us that Warburton was merely a man of great and extensive reading, without intellect, acuteness, or wit.



power. The fame of Warburton must, therefore, at length experience a renewal of its brightness; and though perhaps shorn of some of its beams, will receive its merited due at the hands of posterity. A very different effect has time had over the fame of his great competitor: its only influence has been in showering down additional lustre on the name of Samuel Johnson, and giving to it that fixed and permanent basis and foundation which it is only for posterity to bestow. The best proof which can be given of the extensive circulation of his writings, is the visible effect which they have had over literature and criticism; and the incontestable assistance they have afforded to the great march of the human mind: while the works of Warburton stand unnumbered amongst the standard productions in theology and criticism; and his great work, the *Divine Legation*, remains, to use the words of Gibbon, "a monument crumbling in the dust, of the vigour and weakness of the human mind." As there is, I believe, no writing extant in which the merits of these extraordinary men have been made the subject of comparative criticism, though certainly the most alike in the peculiarities of their mental character of any of the literary worthies of their age, the most equal in force of intellect and universality of power,—an examination and inquiry into their respective talents and characters may not be without its particular benefit. It will, at least, be of use in displaying how far it is possible for abilities the most splendid to seduce their possessor to extravagance in the search for originality; and how transient and momentary is the fame of paradoxical ingenuity, when compared with that which rests on the immobility of established truth!

To the peculiar education of Warburton, may be ascribed most of the peculiarities of his character. Himself, at first, an obscure provincial attorney, undisciplined in the regular course of academical study; and refused, when he had even risen to celebrity, a common academical honour; owing none of the varied exuberance of his knowledge to professors or professorships, to universities or colleges; he naturally cherished a secret dislike to the regular disciplinarians of learning; and it was, at once, his delight and his pride to confound the followers of the beaten path in study, by recondite

and variously sparkling erudition—to oppose himself to whole cohorts of the standard corps of literature, in the confidence of his own individual power; to strike out new paths in learning, and open new vistas in knowledge, with the rapidity of an enchanter; to demolish the old and stationary structures of theology and literature, and overturn them from their foundations, for the purpose of erecting his own novelties in their stead, which supplied what they wanted of solidity, by speciousness and splendour; and to dazzle and astound the supporters of established principles and maxims, by combating them with a force of reason, and strength of logic, which was, perhaps, as unexampled as it was audacious. His learning and his mental powers were equally established without assistance, and his haughtiness loved to show how his inbred mental vigour had triumphed over difficulties. From the same source arose both the excellencies and defects of his character. No pruning hand had ever been exerted to remove the excrescences which had been generated in his mind, and to tame and sober the wildness and extravagance with which it was so often overshadowed. Thus his intellect rose up in rough and unshorn mightiness, and with it the pullulating seeds of sophistical ingenuity, which grew with its growth and strengthened with its strength, till at last he became an inveterate and radicated system monger, and his mind a repository, where every subject in theology, criticism, or literature, had an hypothesis ready prepared for it. Nor less powerful in its influence, on his character, was the first reception he met with in literature,—in the universal war, which seemed, at his first rise, to be proclaimed against him. That his innovating and paradoxical spirit should procure him many adversaries, was hardly to be doubted, but, as if the hypotheses he advanced were matters of established belief, he resented every departure from them, as a departure from truth itself; and his ungovernable haughtiness, and impatience of contradiction, flamed out in angry defiance against his opposers, and overwhelmed them with an overpowering torrent of scurrility and abuse, which was served by an inexpugnable force of argument, and strengthened by an unequalled promptitude of wit. From these primary circumstances, his mind, received an in-



delible impression; and from his first advance to greatness, to his last approach to imbecility, he was the same, and unchanged; the same constructor of systems, the same desperate controversialist, the same dogmatical decider, the same determined oppugner of whatever authority had sanctioned in theology, or common sense established in taste. The resources of his ingenuity were not exhausted by time—the severity of his pen was not composed by age—and Lowth, on whom his last attack was made, was no less fated than his first antagonist, Tillard, to receive the overflowings of his gall.

The character of Dr. Johnson was, perhaps, not less influenced by external circumstances, but they had much less influence on the purely intellectual part of it. If the early difficulties through which he struggled, in conjunction with the original irritability of his system, gave a strong tinge of morosity to his character, that morosity was not communicated entire and unsoftened to his writings. It did not form a constituent and essential part of his compositions—a kind of perpetual and inseparable quality of the mind—nor was the same itch for controversy so completely engrafted into, and connected with it. He had not any of that foolish knight errantry which leads forth its votaries to renew, in the intellectual arena, the ancient feats of personal prowess and individual strength; and which would sally forth, manfully dealing its blows to the right hand and to the left, careless on whom they fell, and regardless what side they injured, for no certain purpose or visible design, save to manifest the mightiness of its own strength. He did not vainly and ridiculously oppose himself to the world, for he well knew, that he who takes the world for his opponent, is sure, in the end, not to win; and that, at last, his consolation will only be that of Nathaniel Lee in the madhouse, “The world thinks me mad, and I think them so, but numbers have prevailed over right.” He did not concern himself to answer every trifling and foolish attack which ignorance and malignity might make upon him, for he well knew, that to do so is but to give duration to objects in themselves insignificant; and which, otherwise, would be speedily forgotten. The only controversial compositions he has left behind, are his letters to Jonas Hanway; and in

these, there is such a spirit of good humoured placidity, as completely to prove, that controversial rancour formed no part of his disposition. Possessing, from his long intercourse with mankind, and deep insight into manners and men, much more practical good sense than his great rival, and entertaining a much greater habitual regard for established institutions, he was not so desirous of leading the multitude from the road they had frequented to new formed paths of his own. He had too much reverence for what bore the semblance of truth, to wish to discredit its supporters; or, by making attempts to beautify its outward appearance, to run the hazard of undermining its foundation in the end. With an equal portion of that ingenuity and novelty of fancy which gives new colours to every subject, and brings to every theme new and unhackneyed accessions of mind, he had too much intellectual solidity to delight in framing hypotheses which could not communicate to the mind that satisfaction on which he loved to repose—and without the power of giving which all theories are but empty triflings. He had too much soundness in his taste to split into systems, and quarter into subtleties, the unchanged and unchangeable principles of nature, or to convert into intricate and interwoven propositions the plain and unerring dictates of reason. His devotion to truth was too strong to suffer him to deceive others—his judgment too sound to allow him to be deceived himself—whether the deceit was introduced by the reveries of a fervid imagination, or the insinuating dexterity of self love. He is once reported to have said, “How great might have been my fame, had not my sole object been truth;” and the fixed foundation on which his fame now stands, may be considered as some reward for his immediate self denial.

(To be continued.)

#### ANECDOTES OF THE BASTILLE.

From the New Monthly Magazine.

Count de B—, a lieutenant general in the French army, who died about the commencement of the revolution, had lived on terms of intimacy with the two M. M. de Belle-Isle, of whom he occasionally related interesting private anecdotes. The following particulars are so extremely curious that they deserve to be recorded:

The count and the chevalier de Belle-



Isle were grandsons of the famous intendant Fouquet; and notwithstanding the disgrace of their grandfather, they were pretty well advanced in the military service at the death of Louis XIV. After the saturnalia of the regency, they became involved in the disasters of Le Blanc, the secretary of state for the war department, and the two brothers were arrested and put under close confinement in the Bastille. To aggravate their misfortune, they were imprisoned in separate apartments. The chevalier was constantly endeavouring to devise some plan by which he might be enabled to enjoy the society of his brother. He had with him a valet de chambre, a young man of spirit and activity, and who, moreover, possessed no small share of cunning: he had been educated as a surgeon, and, at his own solicitation, was permitted to share his master's captivity. By means of intrigue, and artful interrogations, he learned, that an apartment, then unoccupied, was the only disposable one in the prison, and that it was immediately below that allotted to the count. He accordingly formed his plan, without saying a word on the subject to the chevalier.

The chevalier, though a man of intrepid courage, occasionally exhibited a weakness of mind which is not without example even in persons of the firmest character: he was unable to bear the sight of a wound, or even to hear one spoken of without experiencing those disagreeable sensations to which nervous persons are liable, and which often terminate in completely overpowering the organic faculties. This reciprocal mental and physical reaction, in the human frame, is unaccounted for, though its existence cannot be doubted. It resembles those puerile, but unconquerable antipathies we experience at the sight of certain animals, or the odour of particular plants; or rather, perhaps, those fits of vertigo with which persons (who on all other occasions exhibit perfect self-possession) are seized on ascending a height, or when on the brink of a precipice. Be that as it may, no man is a hero to his valet de chambre; and the knowledge of this habit enabled the faithful servant of the chevalier de Belle-Isle the better to arrange his schemes. The governor of the Bastille paid frequent visits to his two prisoners. The conversation of the chevalier particularly pleased him. The valet was occasionally permitted to join them; for he had a number of stories, anecdotes, and jests, with which he enlivened conversation, and excited the interest and curiosity of

his hearers. One day he very adroitly turned the discourse to the battle of Hochstadt, in which he had served in the medical department of the army. He did not fail to dwell on this subject with all the eloquence he was master of. All the wounds he had dressed—all the amputations he had seen performed—all the heart-rending groans he had heard—nothing was spared. At length to effect his object with the more certainty, he even overcharged the picture. The talisman had the desired effect. The chevalier performed his part the better by not being prepared for it; he grew pale, became gradually more and more languid, and at last fainted. The zealous valet flew to his assistance; and by applying the usual remedies, soon recovered his master. The governor anxiously inquired the cause of the sudden indisposition of the chevalier. "Sir," said the valet, "grateful for your goodness and attention, my master did not venture to complain to you; but, certainly, the room you have assigned to him is very injurious to his delicate nerves. The accident you have witnessed takes place almost daily; and indeed, I cannot answer for the chevalier's life, if his lodgings be not changed." The governor, an old officer, better acquainted with military affairs than with physiology, did not hesitate a moment. "Why did you not speak before," exclaimed he, "my dear chevalier? There is a room vacant on the other side of the fort, and you shall be removed to it this very evening." The chevalier returned thanks, and the governor withdrew to give his orders. He well knew that the two brothers would thus be nearer each other; but he relied on the thickness of the walls, and the vigilance of the sentinels, to prevent all intercourse between them. He was deceived, for misfortune is ingenious. After a minute search, the chevalier and his valet discovered a chimney pipe, which led to the count's chamber, and a communication was soon established between the two brothers.

It was of great importance for the prisoners to be able thus to concert together for their common defence; but that was not all—it was necessary to find the means of annihilating the material evidence which might compromise them. There was one very serious accusation, which could be supported only by one individual, namely a clerk in one of the offices of the war department. This man was easily intimidated, and still more easily gained over by promises; the prisoners, however, had but



a very superficial knowledge of him. The chevalier de Belle-Isle, therefore, arranged his plan from conjecture; and tranquilly awaited the day when he should be confronted with his accusers.

According to the old French system of judicial investigation, the first examinations were always secret. The witness appeared in the presence of the accused, and no person attended the proceedings except the judge and the clerk. The prescribed rules, however, were not very rigorously observed where the accused party happened to be a person of rank. In the present case the deposition was read. It was very strong, but the chevalier soon knew the man he had to deal with. He composed himself, and listened with profound attention to the evidence. Surprise, grief and impatience, were by turns painted in his countenance. When the reading was ended, he rushed forward to the witness, and, seizing his hand, he exclaimed, in the most emphatic way, "How, Sir, can it be possible that you are my accuser! You, whom I have ever regarded as a friend! Can you lend an ear to such absurd calumnies?" He continued to address the witness in a tone of vehemence and warmth, which indicated an affectionate complaint rather than a bitter recrimination, until he observed some happy result of his eloquence. He moreover employed an argument on which he relied with still greater confidence. On seizing the witness' hand, he contrived to slip into it a note, which he had prepared for the purpose; and thus placed the witness in the delicate alternative of becoming either his accuser or his accomplice. The movement of the chevalier de Belle-Isle was so sudden and unexpected, that nobody could think of opposing him; and besides it appeared extremely natural, and strictly within the bounds of legal defence. The witness was confounded by the impressive appeal that had been made to him; and found that he was in possession of a secret, which might decide the fate of an accused person, who had thus thrown himself on his generosity. He was aware of the danger of retracting, while, at the same time, he was flattered by the condescending way in which a man of rank treated him as his friend—in short, he was perplexed by conflicting thoughts and sentiments. The chevalier observed the embarrassment of his antagonist, and felt the necessity of immedi-

ately relieving him. Resuming the evidence article by article, he endeavoured to soften it down, and at the same time to avoid compromising the witness by blank denials. His plan succeeded. The charges became more and more feeble, till, at length, the whole evidence rested on a few unimportant assertions, which, there was reason to hope, might be satisfactorily refuted. The sitting terminated; but such was the terror with which the witness was seized, that he had not courage to unclothe the hand in which he held the note. He passed the drawbridge of the Bastille, and wandered through almost every street in Paris, like a criminal dreading the glance of every one he met. It was not until he reached the Pont Royal that he ventured, by stealth, to cast his eyes on the note. Within the first envelop were written these words: "If you faithfully and speedily deliver the enclosed note according to its address, your fortune is made." The inner note was directed to a lady, the intimate friend of the chevalier, requesting her to take charge of, and to suppress certain letters which might prove of the utmost injury to his cause. The commission was punctually fulfilled, and the witness received the promised reward.

The above were not the only extraordinary circumstances attending the fate of the M. M. de Belle-Isle. When the evidence against them was at an end, the two brothers were granted somewhat more freedom, and also the permission of living together. By means of secret communications, they had agreed with a friend that if their sentence should be unfavourable, they were to be warned of it by the firing of a certain number of guns. One day as they were walking together on one of the ramparts of the prison, they heard the signal, and the fatal number of guns announced their irrevocable condemnation. They descended mournfully, and retired to their gloomy apartment. In a few minutes their friend rushed in to inform them of their acquittal. On inquiring into the cause of the mistake, it was found to have been occasioned by a gun maker of the Fauxbourg St. Antoine, who happened that day to be making trial of some of his guns.

After their liberation, the most brilliant fortune attended the two prisoners. The chevalier was created a count, and promoted to the rank of lieutenant general. After distinguishing himself honourably



in the service of his country, he was killed at the attack of Col-de-l'Assiette, in the year 1746. His elder brother, who is celebrated for many acts of valour and military skill, particularly for the retreat of Prague, was created a duke, a peer and marechal of France, and died minister of war in 1761. At the commencement of the seven years' war, he had the misfortune to lose his only son, the count de Gisos, a young officer of the greatest promise. Thus perished the last branches of the family of the intendant. Like him, they possessed all the brilliant qualifications necessary for the success of ambitious projects; and they were memorable examples of the frowns and favours of fortune.

#### LIVING IN LONDON.

From the "Ayrshire Legatees," in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine.

*Andrew Pringle, Esq. to the Rev. Charles Snodgrass.*

My dear Friend—You are not aware of the task you impose, when you request me to send you some account of the general way of living in London. Unless you come here, and actually experience yourself what I would call the London ache, it is impossible to supply you with any adequate idea of the necessity that exists in this wilderness of mankind, to seek refuge in society without being over fastidious with respect to the intellectual qualifications of your occasional associates. In a remote desert, the solitary traveller is subject to apprehensions of danger, but still he is the most important thing "within the circle of that lonely waste;" and the sense of his own dignity enables him to sustain the shock of considerable hazard with spirit and fortitude. But, in London, the feeling of self importance is totally lost and suppressed in the bosom of a stranger. A painful conviction of insignificance—of nothingness, I may say, is sunk upon his heart, and murmured in his ear by the million, who divide with him that consequence which he unconsciously before supposed he possessed in a general estimate of the world. While elbowing my way through the unknown multitude, that flows between Charing Cross and the Royal Exchange, this mortifying sense of my own insignificance has often come upon me with the energy of a pang, and I have thought, that after all we can say of any man, the effect of the greatest influence of

an individual on society at large, is but as that of a pebble thrown into the sea. Mathematically speaking, the undulations which the pebble causes, continue until the whole mass of the ocean has been disturbed to the bottom of its most secret depths and farthest shores; and perhaps, with equal truth it may be affirmed, that the sentiments of the man of genius are also infinitely propagated; but how soon the physical impression of the one is lost to every sensible perception, and the moral impulse of the other swallowed up from all practical effect.

But though London, in the general, may be justly compared to the vast and restless ocean, or to any other thing that is either sublime, incomprehensible, or affecting, it loses all its influence over the solemn associations of the mind when it is examined in its details. For example, living on the town, as it is slangishly called, the most friendless and isolated condition possible, is yet fraught with an amazing diversity of enjoyment. Thousands of gentlemen, who have survived the relish of active fashionable pursuits, pass their life in that state without tasting the delight of one new sensation. They rise in the morning merely because Nature will not allow them to remain longer in bed. They begin the day without motive or purpose, and close it after having performed the same unvaried round as the most thoroughbred domestic animal that ever dwelt in manse or manor house. If you ask them at three o'clock where they are to dine, they cannot tell you; but about the wonted dinner hour, batches of these forlorn bachelors find themselves diurnally congregated, as if by instinct, around a cozy table in some snug coffee house, where, after inspecting the contents of the bill of fare, they discuss the news of the day, reserving the scandal, by way of desert, for their wine. Day after day their respective political opinions give rise to keen encounters, but without producing the slightest shade of change in any of their old ingrained and particular sentiments.

Some of their haunts, I mean those frequented by the elderly race, are shabby enough in their appearance and circumstances, except perhaps in the quality of the wine. Every thing in them is regulated by an ancient and precise economy, and you perceive, at the first glance, that all is calculated on the principle of the house giving as much for the money as it can possibly afford, without infringing those little etiquettes which persons of gentle-



manly habits regard as essentials. At half price the junior members of these unorganized or natural clubs retire to the theatres, while the elder brethren mind their potations till it is time to go home. This seems a very comfortless way of life, but I have no doubt it is the preferred result of a long experience of the world, and that the parties, upon the whole, find it superior, according to their early formed habits of dissipation and gaiety, to the sedate but not more regular course of a domestic circle.

#### MINT OF THE UNITED STATES.

*January 1st, 1821.*

Sir—I have now the honour of laying before you a report of the operations of the mint for the last year.

From the statement of the treasurer, herewith transmitted, it will appear that, during this period, there have been struck at the mint,

In gold coins, 263,806 pieces, amounting to \$1,319,030 00.

In silver coins, 1,821,153 pieces, amounting to \$501,680 70.

And in copper coins, 4,407,550 pieces, amounting to \$44,075 50.

Making in the whole, six millions four hundred and ninety-two thousand, five hundred and nine pieces; amounting to one million, eight hundred and sixty-four thousand seven hundred and eighty-six dollars and twenty cents.

The above coinage of gold and silver has, in fact, been the work of no more than nine months; for, from the deficiency of deposits, the actual coinage did not commence till the beginning of April, and was even afterwards frequently interrupted, from the same cause. The press employed in the copper coinage did not continue in operation more than six months, as the quantity of copper coins had accumulated far beyond the public demand.

From the above statement, with other well ascertained data, it may, I presume, be confidently affirmed, that the mint, in its present improved state, will be found fully adequate to all the purposes for which it was originally established.

I have the honour to be, with perfect respect, your most obedient servant,

R. PATTERSON.

JAMES MONROE, President of the U. S.

#### VEGETABLE THUNDER RODS.

From some ingenious experiments, made by Lapostolle, apothecary at Amiens, it

appears that straw is as perfect a conductor of electricity as any of the metals. With the end of a cord of this material an inch long, the electric fluid may be drawn from the strongest battery, without experiencing the slightest shock. The discoverer thinks the country may be sheltered from the ravages of thunder, and even of hail, by elevating on every sixty acres a pole twenty feet high, with a straw cord, surmounted by a metallic point.

[*Jour. Universel des Scien. Med.*]

#### Poetry.

##### STANZAS

*Written in a park in Surry, October, 1820.*

The earlier frosts had long begun  
Their work on every tenderer tree,  
And nearly banished, one by one,  
Blithe summer's tints of greenery;  
For every bough's extremity  
Turned slowly to an alien hue;  
The ashes faded to a yellow,  
The limes became all sickly fallow,  
And tawny red the hawthorns grew.

The beeches' gloss fled fast away,  
And left them brown as iron ore;  
And e'en the old oak's outer spray,  
Marks of this nightly searing bore;  
And yester eve, the frequent shower  
Shrouded the moon in wat'ry gloom,  
And drench'd the branches drooping low;  
And now, a more relentless foe!  
Hoarse wind of Autumn, thou art come!

By the loud uproar of the din,  
Pour'd thro' yon swaying avenue;  
Whose arching elms, to one within,  
Appear some huge cathedral view;  
And by those flickering leaves that strew  
The late uncumbered tracks of deer—  
And by that tossing pine, which fast  
Stoops like some drifting shallop's mast,  
Hoarse wind of Autumn, thou art here!

See how the deer are crowding round  
Yon group of patriarchal oaks,  
Whose wide extended arms rebound  
Against the blast's assiduous strokes:  
The dappled herd, with anxious looks,  
And heads all earthward bending move,  
To pry where auburn acorns rest  
New shaken from their cups above,  
And glean a rich autumnal feast.

Ay, wind of Autumn, wild and rude  
Thou com'st, to rend with ruthless hand  
The sickening foliage of the wood;  
For all that spring, with nurture bland,  
Of mild and tepid breezes fann'd—  
And fed with balmy dew and shower;  
And all that summer's sunny sky  
Disclosed in rich maturity,  
Must sink before thy wasting power.

Thy hands are busy, noisy blast,  
In stripping each discoloured tree,  
Of shoals of leaves which flutter past—



Their ruin this, but sport to thee.  
And though thy violence we see,  
Now tearing down a load, and now  
But what would fill an infant's hand;  
Yet ere thou goest, each tree shall stand  
With trunk unveil'd, and leafless bough.

Yet no—the oak and beech shall still  
Hold to the south some garland sere,  
Nor lose these hard kept honours till  
The winter wind, thy wild compeer,  
Roar still more loudly in the ear.  
And see, the holly stands secure,  
It scorns you both, defies your bluster,  
Nor loses leaf, nor coral cluster,  
Unless for Christmas garniture.

Like leaves from some deciduous tree,  
Since youthful fancies fall away,  
Oh, may I like yon holly be,  
And gain those stabler tastes, which stay!  
Nor, as life's seasons change, decay!  
May I accomplishments possess,  
To make me—like the holly bower—  
Retain a cheering leafiness,  
Yea, even in age's wintry hour. R.  
[*Blackwood's Ed. Mag.*]

#### THE SMITH'S WIFE.

By copious draughts, and jarring disputes fired,  
From whiskey shop the reeling smith retired;  
His wife predoomed to feel a tyrant's hand,  
And dread the thunder of his harsh command,  
With beating heart his tottering footsteps hears,  
Whilst broken curses murmur in her ears,  
Each quaking imp discerns th' approaching wo,  
And feels, in every step, a coming blow.

Oh shame to manhood—blot on nature's plan,  
And only in thine outward form a man!  
Shamed by the fiercest brute that roams the  
plain;

The tiger loves, and is beloved again;  
The fierce hyæna—"fellest of the fell"—  
In soft connubial amity will dwell.

She shrinks at thy approach, whose broken  
heart

In all thy varied fortunes bore a part;  
And even now, beneath this load of ill,  
That broken-hearted woman loves thee still—  
Clings to the arm that strikes her—bathes thy  
bed

With tears for thee and for thy infants shed.

Oh woman! injured, basely scoffed, and  
scorned,

With all but immortality adorned,  
Where'er thy destiny has fixed thy fate,  
Or in the cottage, or the hall of state,  
Thy proudest boast, than all thy charms more  
dear—

Is "Patience," in the state we picture here.  
[*Ibid.*]

FROM THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

#### GALLERY OF BRITISH POETS—NO. I.

*Messrs. Byron, Moore, and Scott.*

Three poets, in one lucky century born,  
Old England, Ireland, Scotia, did adorn.  
One hated all mankind worse than the D—l;  
One lov'd all women, whether good or evil;

The third, true to the land from whence he came,  
Lov'd money best; and who the man can blame?  
Since one rich bard will more observance find,  
Than twenty wandering Homers, poor and blind;  
And rhyme and wealth, united, raise more won-  
der,  
Than Genius cloth'd in lightning, rags, and  
thunder. YANKEE DOODLE.

#### Agriculture.



"Let us cultivate the ground, that the poor, as well as  
the rich, may be filled; and happiness and peace be esta-  
blished throughout our borders."

*Remarks on the late Cattle Procession in  
Philadelphia, with Directions how to  
effectually promote the Breed of Cattle.  
By James Mease, M. D. Vice President  
of the Philadelphia Society for pro-  
moting Agriculture.*

Read before the Society on the 20th March, 1821, and ordered  
to be published in the National Recorder.

Now that the recent "Splendid Show"  
of fat cattle has passed,\* it may be well  
to reflect upon the exhibition; to exa-  
mine the justness of the claims it had to  
the imposing title of its alleged object, and  
utility; to ask ourselves, whether that  
object and that end will be in the least  
promoted by such a procedure first and  
last, as we have witnessed; and whether  
there are not other measures more calcu-  
lated to attain both, and at a much cheap-  
er rate, than those which have been  
adopted.

The exhibition was entitled "*Pennsyl-  
vania against the World*:" 65 oxen, 4  
hogs, 19 sheep, ten kids, 3 deer, 4 bears,  
had been kept for different periods at  
an extra allowance of pasture and short  
feed, for the purpose of seeing how much  
flesh and fat could be put on their bo-  
dies, and how much fat be made to cover

\* The cattle were exhibited in stalls in the  
upper part of the city from the 8th to the 12th  
March. They were then killed, and their quar-  
ters carried about the city in formal procession  
in carts on the 15th.



their intestines. The object as alleged, is the "improving the breed of cattle." Let us reflect a moment, and ask how such an end can be obtained by the measures pursued.

It is apprehended, that it will not be difficult to prove, that the desirable objects contemplated will not be effected; that the zeal and spirit of the concerned have been most egregiously misapplied; that the exhibition was calculated to keep up a bad fashion and ruinous practice among graziers, and that a more rational plan must be adopted before the desirable end of the "improvement of the breed of cattle," can be effected.

The same principles which are so well established with regard to the human race, apply with full force to the brute creation. How then, it may be asked, is the form of mankind improved? Is it by long continued overfeeding them, when in the decline of life, to clothe their bodies and line their interiors with loads of fat? What would be thought of a people who avowed that such means were the best to mend the shapes of a badly formed community? And yet the fashionable practice among graziers with their cattle is not less absurd. Excluding the bears, deers and kids from consideration, let us confine our remarks to cattle, sheep and hogs. A number of large framed oxen with capacious bodies, some of them eight or nine years old, are selected, and after the fullest allowance of the finest pasture, either hired, or given to them to the exclusion of the rest of the stock on the farm, are put up in the winter, and fed at regular hours with as much Indian-corn meal, ground oats, potatoes, pumpkins and hay as they can possibly digest, and until they groan from the oppression they suffer, and their hides carded and rubbed with as much attention as is bestowed upon a southern race horse. Sometimes corn meal and the other articles are given to the animal while at pasture. From one to even four years of such treatment are required to bring the animal to the "sticking point." Sheep of the New Leicester or Bakewell breed are also selected, for similar experiments. This breed, from its admirable form, is known to take on fat with great ease, and individuals of it, with good pasture, will always in one season become as fat as any reasonable man ought to desire; but by the treatment mentioned they are so overloaded with fat as scarcely to be eatable. The same

remark is applicable to hogs, some of which, upon the late occasion, were absolutely blind from the projection of fat over their eyes, and required to be raised from their beds of straw to take food. None of them could walk without difficulty. Let us ask how these operations will improve the breed of cattle? Did any of these crammed beasts leave their progeny behind them? The absurdity of naming the object to be effected by this excessive feeding, "the improvement of the breed of cattle," is evident. Where, moreover, is the utility of such overfeeding? If it be said that it furnishes a market for grain and hay, why not apply the extra feed consumed by the show cattle, sheep and hogs, to the fattening thrice the number of head, all of which by it would have been turned off in as excellent order as is required for human stomachs of ordinary powers of digestion. The difficulty is to find lean enough in the cattle and sheep to eat: as to the hogs, nineteen-twentieths of their weight will be consigned to the manufacturers of soap.\*

Any animal however badly shaped, can be made inordinately fat, sooner or later, by extra quantities of nourishing food; but this is not the way to improve the farm stock of a country. Plain reason and sound sense dictate that what we require, is a breed that will soonest furnish the greatest quantity of good meat or milk at the least expense. It is only in this way, that the advances of the grazier will be returned to him, and it is the quick return and circulation of capital that enriches a nation. The money expended and even lost by feeding heavy show beef cattle, impoverish more or less a country, by diminishing the means which the feeders would have had without such expenditure, of bringing to market a greater number of cattle in future.

Two methods, and two only, exist by which farm stock can be improved. The first is by breeding from those native individuals of a kind, possessing the forms known to take on most easily flesh and fat, and by occasionally crossing their pro-

\* Other bad effects of such public processions are the loss of work among every class of mechanics, the interruption to the education of the poor, and the temptation to useless expense for strong drink which they excite, at a time, too, when the means of employment are so greatly circumscribed as at present. When this paper was read, many facts in proof were given by different members.



geny with others having points in which those resulting from former experiments, may be deficient. If milk be the object, subjects should be selected which yield great quantities of it, and of a good quality, and retain it longest; and crosses may be made with those males within our reach having the best forms and least offal. Materials for such experiments are by no means deficient among us, but unfortunately the spirit for slow improvement does not sufficiently prevail among our intelligent cultivators. In this way a man may in a few years obtain a breed, from which he may live to derive great profit. It is by such methods, that the breeds of England and some parts of the continent of Europe, have been brought to the great perfection which they at present exhibit.

A second and much more expeditious method of improving the breed of cattle, is, by importing such stock from Europe as possess the points to which we wish to direct our attention.

The diffusion of the merino and New Leicester breed of sheep, sets us at ease respecting those inestimable animals. It is to the increase of beef and milk, that the spirited improver should chiefly attend: and fortunately a breed combining both objects is easily attainable, by the importation of the "*improved short-horned cattle*" from England; a race which, owing to the persevering industry and intelligence of the breeders in the north of England, has reached to as much perfection as can be conceived or desired. Some of this valuable stock are already in the United States. Mr. Williams of Northborough, Massachusetts, has a noble specimen of it, and several of his descendants are in the vicinity of Philadelphia, in the possession of a gentleman animated with the true spirit of improvement, and who formed his judgment on this subject from an attentive examination of the best specimens of the stock in England, and comparing them with other breeds. Two arrived in Philadelphia about three years since, on their way to Kentucky, where they brought one thousand dollars a piece at public auction. A son of the famous Comet, which sold for one thousand guineas, at the sale of Mr. Colling's cattle, in England, is at New Brunswick, New Jersey: but if every county in every state had a pair of them, the nation could not be soon overstocked. An inspection of the animals alluded to, would convince any one acquainted with the good

points of stock, how far the short-horned breed is superior to all others hitherto introduced into the United States, in the great objects of size and form. But as it is in the power of few to enjoy such gratifying sights, some particulars shall be given, to show the grounds upon which our praises are bestowed. Mr. Charles Champion, of Blyth, near Bawtry, Nottinghamshire, England, writes to me as follows: "You mention the weights of several oxen which have been slaughtered in America, but as you have not stated their ages, I suppose they must have been six or seven years old:\* their weights were certainly great, but in England we do not consider those overgrown animals the most profitable: our lands are generally so highly rented, and the poor rates and taxes so exceedingly burdensome to the farmers, as to call forth their best exertions, and it becomes his interest to select that breed of cattle which will make the quickest and most profitable return for the food they consume: for these objects, no breed is so eminently distinguished as the *improved short-horns*: their early maturity being a fact now so well established, that they are spreading in every direction, both in England and Ireland. It has been my practice for some years to feed my steers, and sell them to the butcher from two up to three years old, when they generally average 70 stone of 14 lbs. (980 lbs.) with 10 stones (140 lbs.) of loose tallow. I sold a steer by Blyth Comet in May, 1817, at Blyth fair, for £36, weighing 72 stones (1008 lbs.) and he was only 22 months old. At my sale the other day (January 28, 1820,) I sold a steer to Mr. Arnsby, which is now two years and ten months old, and would weigh if killed, 105 stones, (1470 lbs.) This steer is by Blyth Comet. In November, 1812, my turnips having failed, I sold ten young steers, all of my own breeding, to my brother, who fed them in an open yard, without a shed to go under, upon Swedish turnips and straw, without any other food, except a small quantity of clover hay, once a day, for about a month before he sold them. The price I obtained for the steers in November, was £17 each, being at the time a full market price, and my brother sold them for £39 10s. each, leaving £22 10s. each for five months keeping."

Mr. Champion has presented to the Philadelphia Society for promoting Agriculture, a finely engraved portrait of a steer raised by him, from a painting he had taken

\* Mr. Champion was right in his conjecture.



a few days before it left Blyth for London: this print is hung up in the room of the society, and cannot fail to draw forth expressions of admiration from every judge of cattle. The weight of the four quarters, as set down on the corner of the print, was 178 stones, which at 8 lbs. to the London stone, make 1424 lbs. The tallow weighed 199 lbs. A bull three years and two months old, of the same breed (the short-horned) but from a different stock, weighed alive 160 stones (2240 lbs.): and his four quarters were laid at 1540 lbs.: Six steers, three years and six months old, weighed, the four quarters, 94 stones each (1316 lbs.) Their tallow weighed from nine to ten stone each, (126—140 lbs.) These cattle belonged to Mr. John Nicholson of Gipton, near Leeds, Yorkshire. What weights would such stock reach, had they the advantage of Indian corn?\*

When the intelligent American grazier calculates the difference between the profit of feeding an animal, which, say at three years old, will reach these weights of flesh and fat, and reflects on the loss commonly sustained by feeding another, six or eight years old, for a much longer period, in order to make him equal in weight, he cannot for a moment hesitate to make up his mind on the superior advantage to be derived from the short-horned breed.†

The importation of a pair of them is therefore urgently suggested to the spirited American grazier. The expense will soon be repaid: for the reputation of the breed which will precede their arrival, and much more, the sight of the animal, will create an anxiety in our farmers, who are quick in discerning sources of profitable investment, to possess themselves of it. The great prices given for merino sheep during the late war with England, and for the mere use of a new Leicester

\* The value set upon the "*improved short-horned breed of cattle*," may be judged of from the prices they bring at auction. At a sale of the stock of Robert Collings of Bamton, Co. Durham, Sept. 1818, 61 lots of cattle and sheep brought 9496*l.* 4*s.* sterling—the cattle sold for 7852*l.* 19*s.* At Mr. Champion's sale at Blyth, Jan. 1820, twenty head averaged 38 guineas and 3-5ths each.

† There can be no difficulty in procuring a pair of these inestimable cattle. A letter directed to Mr. Champion would soon reach him, and on being satisfied as to the lodgment of funds in London, would doubtless make all the necessary arrangements for the safety and sustenance of the stock. A man must accompany the animals to take care of them on shipboard. Twelve hundred dollars would cover all expenses for a pair, insurance included.

tup, before that event, and while the full blood was confined to one man, afforded ample proof that farmers do not hesitate to risk high prices for stock, when a reasonable probability exists of obtaining quickly an interest for capital advanced:‡ and when we reflect that the amount of the losses sustained by those concerned in preparing the objects for the late show, and of two former similar exhibitions, would be much more than sufficient to secure to Pennsylvania a pair of the breed of cattle in question, it is to be regretted that so much money should have been thrown away, without producing any permanent benefit to the country. Our farmers reflecting, that by crossing the best of their own stock, or the best they could procure, with the foreign breed, they secured a portion of a distinctive, strongly marked race, the characters and valuable properties of which would certainly increase as they advanced in the blood, would be led to make the experiment, and the gratification derived from the thriving disposition and beauty of form, exhibited in the progeny shortly after their appearance on their farms, would stimulate them to its repetition: and when, after a few years they found that the new breed furnished more and richer beef, at a much earlier age, and with less feed than is commonly required for native stock, and richer milk, and better working oxen than any they before had, their minds will be made up as to the exclusion of all other breeds of horned cattle from their farms. But this is not all; their stock will be viewed by their less enterprising and more cautious neighbours: motives of interest and self satisfaction derived from the treasure in possession, will excite the owner to diffuse a knowledge of its value, which will be every year more and more enhanced, and the demand for it be enlarged, from the increasing numbers annually engaging in the agricultural life. Hence a source of revenue will be secured to himself and family.

The peculiar marks which designate this breed from all others, are, capacious barrel shaped bodies, straight backs, broad loins, small neck and head, full chins, leaving no hollows behind the shoulders, clean chaps, bright and prominent eyes, deep chests projecting well before the legs:

‡ From \$100 to \$500 were given for a merino tup: and \$150, and \$200, were paid by several for the use of a new Leicester tup, to captain Farmer, of New Brunswick, New Jersey, for one season.



fore legs clean, straight, and standing wide; not knock-kneed (or in-kneed,) wide hips and round; rump lying in a horizontal direction, not sinking backwards: the tail set on so high as to take in the same line with the back, and lastly small bones. A portrait of a bull of this breed, may be seen in the "Archives of Useful Knowledge, vol. i. p. 358," and plates of several more, and of cows of the same breed, in "*Tuke's Survey of Yorkshire*."

There is another breed of cattle, the Scotch, or Kyloes, well deserving the attention of the American improver, on account of their extreme hardy constitution, and tendency to early fattening on grass alone, and of their filling up a vacancy in the supply of good beef about August and September, a time, when the heavy cattle of the preceding season have all been killed off, and the stock of the season have not come in. Repeated experiments with the Kyloes in England, have shown that in one summer, at four years old, they will reach from 500 to 700 lbs. weight, with from 70 to 90 lbs. loose fat.

The great misfortune has hitherto been in the United States, as respects cattle, that, although within the last 30 years, they have greatly improved in form, owing to judicious crosses between native stock, and occasionally with foreign breeds that were introduced, yet no blood has been kept so pure, as to enable any one to say he possessed a race with characters so strongly marked, as would insure their transmission to his or her descendants. Our whole procedure in this business, has been a system of chance, and this want of certainty in our crosses has been one reason why so few have hesitated to accept of a high price for a thriving calf, which had it been raised, might have proved the origin of a valuable breed. It is full time to begin to conduct our operations upon fixed principles, and no time could be more propitious than the present, when a spirit for improvement, which the friends to agriculture have been striving for many years to excite, is diffused through the United States, and when foreign commerce has ceased to offer those allurements, which so powerfully attracted our citizens, and drew off their attention from internal objects.

### Variety.

DR. ARMSTRONG.

His "Art of preserving Health" is one of the most terse, and classical composi-

tions in the language; but most of his other verse, evinces nothing but barren labour. In his lively "Sketches," he acquaints us in the preface, that "he could give them much bolder strokes, as well as more delicate touches, but that he dreads the danger of writing too well, and feels the value of his own labour too sensibly, to bestow it upon the mobility." This is pure milk compared to the gall, in the preface to his poems. There he very modestly tells us, that "he has at last taken the trouble to collect them. What he has destroyed, would, probably enough, have been better received by the great majority of readers. But he has always most heartily despised their opinion." The truth is, he is only showing an undue resentment for some unfortunate productions.

### PRAISE

Is dangerous to those who do not deserve it, by quickening our attention to them. The Spaniards say, in a proverb, which has the peculiar quaintness of that people; *Aviendo pregonado vino, venden vinagre*; having cried up their wine, they sell us vinegar.

### PREFACES.

The most entertaining prefaces in our language, are those of Dryden; and though it is ill-naturedly said, by Swift, that they were merely formed,

"To raise the volume's price a shilling,"

yet these were the earliest commencements of English criticism, and the first attempt to restrain the capriciousness of readers, and to form a national taste. Dryden has had the candour to acquaint us with his secret of prefatory composition; for in that one to his *Tales*, he says, "the nature of preface writing is rambling; never wholly out of the way nor in it. This I have learnt from the practice of honest Montaigne."

### TOPHAM BEAUCLERK.

Mr. Beauclerk had such a propensity to satire, that at one time Johnson said to him, "You never open your mouth but with intention to give pain; and you have often given me pain, not from the power of what you said, but from seeing your intention." At another time applying to him, with a slight alteration, a line of Pope, he said, "Thy love of folly, and thy scorn of fools—Every thing thou dost shows the one, and every thing thou say'st the other." At another time he said to him, "Thy body is all vice, and thy mind all virtue."



## RICHARD.

"Demosthenes Taylor, as he was called (that is, the editor of Demosthenes)," said Johnson, "was the most silent man, the merest statue of a man that I have ever seen. I once dined in company with him, and all he said during the whole time was no more than *Richard*. How a man should say only *Richard*, it is not easy to imagine. But it was thus: Dr. Douglas was talking of Dr. Zachary Grey, and ascribing to him something that was written by Dr. Richard Grey; so to correct him, Taylor said (imitating his affected sententious emphasis and nod,) *Richard*."

## TELLING A STORY.

A learned gentleman, who in the course of conversation wished to inform the company of the simple fact, that the counsel upon the circuit at Shrewsbury were much bitten by fleas, took seven or eight minutes in relating it circumstantially. He in a plenitude of phrase told, that large bales of woollen cloth were lodged in the town hall; that, by reason of this, fleas nestled there in prodigious numbers; that the lodgings of the counsel were near the town hall; and that those little animals moved from place to place with wonderful agility. Dr. Johnson, who was present, sat in great impatience, till the gentleman had finished his tedious narrative, and then burst out (playfully however,) "It is a pity, sir, that you have not seen a lion; for a flea has taken you such a time, that a lion must have served you a twelvemonth."

## DANTE.

Tiraboschi, in his History of Italian Literature, informs us, that Dante was much given to musing, and inclined to melancholy; that he had something like pride in his nature; silent in ordinary company, but when he spoke every word was deeply thought. His conversation was as satirical concerning those he did not esteem, as it was grateful to his friends and patrons. Such was the poet of the sombrous and satiric Inferno.

## PETRARCH,

Says Tiraboschi, was beautiful in his person, enchanting in his conversation, while his eloquence enraptured his delighted auditors. He knew how to vary his employments; to fly from the court into the depth of solitude; and it was thus that this amiable genius became as learned as he was accomplished.

Zimmerman gives another turn to this

continual change of place. He says, in his Solitude, "Petrarch possessed a restless and unquiet mind; displeased because he was not where he could not go; because he could not attain every thing he wished; because he looked in vain for something it was impossible he should find. Petrarch, in short, possessed all those defects which generally accompany men of genius."

When we consider that he proposed to reside at Venice, and made even a present of his library to the republic, yet could not remain there above two years, with other similar resolutions, which were broken almost as soon as formed, one must prefer this opinion of Zimmerman to that of Tiraboschi; so difficult is it, however, to fix on the truth!

## BOCCACIO,

The licentious writer of the most agreeable prose in Italian literature, had neither the sublime melancholy of Dante, nor the enchanting politeness of Petrarch. In the travels which, in his youthful years, he made in the character of a merchant, he had acquired his variety of knowledge of human nature, and a decided taste for that freedom of gaiety, which does not always spare the blushes of the modest, and the tremors of the pious. Love, good eating, and polite literature, were his divinities. He was large and corpulent, an able drinker, an excellent companion, and an adorer of the ladies. The priests, at length, frightened poor Boccaccio, as they afterwards did his happy disciple, La Fontaine. Boccaccio suddenly became reserved, solitary and melancholy; his studies partook of his dispositions, for, after his conversion, (Tiraboschi says) he produced nothing that we can read.

## HOBBES.

It is not amiss, when we read the misanthropic works of Hobbes, to recollect, that the philosopher of Malmesbury wrote many of them in a manner which, perhaps, has rendered them so rugged. We are told, that soon after dinner, he would retire into his study, and have his candle, with ten or twelve pipes, placed by him; then shutting the door, he began smoking, thinking and writing. From a man who would smoke ten pipes at his studies, it was but natural that his writings should retain something of the effluvia of the tobacco. Such a one might be a philosophic politician, but not a poetic philanthropist.



## Literature and Science.

Compiled for the National Recorder.

The grand canal of Ramaniah, which extends from Cairo to Alexandria, was completed in the month of January, 1820. The pacha made a voyage upon it to assure himself that the whole of it had been executed agreeably to his instructions.

[*Rev. Encyc.*

Egypt, under the intelligent and active government of the present pacha, is opening commercial relations with most parts of the world, by means of agents sent by his orders. Specimens of refined sugar have been received at Trieste from the Egyptian manufacture. Cotton, silk, and cloth, are also manufactured in that country.

[*Ib.*

After sixteen days of great fatigue, employed in traversing the deserts of Lybia and Marmorica, M. Frediani, an Italian traveller, has at length succeeded in discovering the famous edifice called the great temple of Jupiter Ammon, which it is supposed has not been visited since the time of Alexander the Great. M. Frediani was accompanied by an escort of 2000 men, and was obliged to open his way by force to this celebrated monument of superstition.

[*Ib.*

In the course of last winter the Russian government established for the comfort of travellers along the Gulf of Finland from St. Petersburg to Cronstadt, guard houses at the distance of three versts or half a league from each other. They are well warmed by stoves, and offer to strangers a comfortable retreat during the night. The top of each house is lighted by a reflector, which can be seen at a great distance, and during a thick fog a bell is frequently rung as a call to those who may wander from their track. Large posts are also erected, surmounted by a pavilion, to serve as guides during a deep snow. At mid-distance an inn is kept, well provided with suitable refreshments.

[*Ib.*

A monument of cast iron has been erected at Pultowa, by the emperor Alexander, in memory of the victory obtained by Peter the Great over Charles the Twelfth, of Sweden.

[*Ib.*

Chance has recently brought to light at the house of a florist, a biography of Linnæus, in the Swedish language, written by himself, and continued to his

death. The manuscript has been sent to Upsal, and will soon be published in an octavo of 500 pages. It will be ornamented with six engravings, presenting two portraits of the celebrated naturalist, a fac simile of his writing, his monument in the cathedral church, and the arms of his family.

[*Ib.*

A premium of 50 louis has been granted to a M. Hangard, by a convention of inhabitants of the Canton de Vaud in Switzerland for the best dissertation on the question, "Would the institution of juries in criminal cases prove advantageous to the Canton de Vaud." The memoir will be printed at the expense of the canton, and spread throughout Switzerland. The author has decided against the establishment of juries in Switzerland, though an admirer in general of that excellent institution. But in this canton the judges are appointed by the people at determinate periods; they receive nothing from the government, and have neither grace, favour nor fortune to hope for. Their independence is established by good laws, and they enjoy besides the entire confidence of the nation. Those reasons, with many others not less plausible, are developed in the memoir with great precision.

[*Ib.*

**Medicine.**—M. Re, professor of Materia Medica in the Veterinary School of Turin, has discovered that the *Lycopus Europæus* of Linnæus, called the Herb of China by the inhabitants of Piedmont, where it grows abundantly, especially in marshy places, possesses the same properties as the *Quinquina*, and may be conveniently used as a substitute.

[*Ib.*

A Bible society has been formed at Athens in Greece, the direction of which is committed to twelve respectable inhabitants, all native Greeks.

### MARRIED.

On the 27th February, at North Meeting, Elisha Dawson, of Maryland, to Mary Laws, of this city.

### TERMS OF PUBLICATION.

Subscriptions to the National Recorder may commence at any time, though it is desirable that they should begin with a volume: they may be withdrawn at the close of any volume, provided notice be sent before any part of the next volume shall have been forwarded. Payment to be made in July of each year for the whole year. Such as begin with the second volume of any year, to pay for that volume on the first of January following. When not otherwise stipulated at the time of subscribing, it is understood that the paper is to be forwarded till an order be sent for its discontinuance.

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